CHARTING OUR COURSE

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL LIBRARIES

A Strategic Plan for Nova Scotia Regional Libraries has been accepted and is currently being emplemented. Here is the published document. The strategic planning process was sponsored by the Nova Scotia Provincial Library, the Council of Regional Librarians, the Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Library Association and facilitated by consultants from People Development, Ltd.

Access For All : A Strategic Plan for Public Libraries in Nova Scotia

The Vision

Every citizen has the right to information, opinions and ideas. Public libraries in Nova Scotia fulfil this right through collections, services and programs.

Principles

1. ***Universal Access:*** All Nova Scotians will have equitable access to the widest range of materials and services for education and recreation regardless of social or economic circumstances, or place of residence. Their libraries are committed to provide barrier free, province wide access to a network of services in many different formats.

2. ***Intellectual Freedom:*** Nova Scotia's libraries will promote, develop and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge, opinion, and intellectual activity.

3. ***Community Relevance:*** Nova Scotia's libraries will reflect their communities through their staff, collections, services and programs.

4. ***Life-Long Learning:*** Nova Scotia's libraries will support each person in obtaining the information, ideas and skills required to be a self-reliant, responsible and contributing member of society.

5. ***Professional Standards:*** Nova Scotia's libraries will ensure that their services, collections and programs meet individual needs and respect individual privacy.

6. ***Co-operation:*** Nova Scotia libraries will cooperate with one another and with their communities to share resources to benefit all.

7. ***Economic and Social Development:*** Libraries contribute to the economic and social development of their communities through adherence to all of these principles.

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Role of Public Libraries

- Educational support centre for learners of all ages
- Centre for research and reference information
- Discovery and learning centre for children
- Place for reading, recreation and personal entertainment
- Community centre for programs and activities

Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goal 1 Barrier Free Access

Provide access to collections, programs, and services free of structural, economic, social, and geographic barriers.

Objective A Identify and remove barriers limiting individual access to library service.

Action Cooperate with concerned groups and communities to identify barriers and ways to eradicate them.

Action Develop information access policies and programs to accommodate the diversity of Nova Scotians, e.g. people with physical and visual handicaps, multicultural groups etc.

Action Develop standards for access to library services eg. hours of service, distance to service points etc.

Action Review the effectiveness of standards and revise them as needed.

Objective B Develop access to and use the most effective technology for information delivery.

Action Implement a Web gateway to all major Nova Scotia library collections and full text data base access to relevant information products in every library.

Goal 2 Public Awareness

Increase the awareness of library services and resources within communities

Objective Develop a comprehensive awareness and advocacy strategy that explains and promotes the changing role of libraries to the public and funding partners.

Action Encourage staff, board members and friends of the library to act as

ambassadors for the library as they participate in community groups, provincial and local organizations and government bodies.

Action Coordinate a network of interested personnel from each regional library to cooperate in initiatives that enhance awareness.

Action Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Library Association develop and implement a plan for library advocacy.

Action Prepare a video that can be used to enhance the role of the library.

Action Target key library user groups such as school boards, literacy groups and disabled populations to enhance their awareness of library service.

Goal 3 ***Client Driven Service***

Deliver educational, cultural and recreational programs and services to satisfy the identified needs of individuals and communities.

Objective A Anticipate community needs and develop effective ways to deliver service.

Action Assess community needs for library based programs and services.

Action Communicate with community groups and institutions to deliver co-ordinated library programs and services.

Action Identify and develop partnerships to support community based programs and services.

Action Develop a system to monitor service performance with emphasis on measuring accountability to end users.

Objective B Develop needed expertise, skills and competencies to meet service expectations.

Action Develop a standard of service that can be applied fairly to urban and rural areas.

Action Develop a flexible and cost-effective framework for providing training for staff.

Action Engage in continuous planning to ensure that individual and community needs are adequately addressed.

Goal 4 ***Adequate Funding***

Develop funding resources to meet established standards for library services and programs.

Objective Coordinate the development of funding activities through key stakeholder groups.

Action Secure firm funding commitments from funding partners in both municipal and provincial governments.

Action Identify opportunities for funding sponsorships at the provincial and local level.

Action Promote cooperation and group buying when it supports effective resource use.

Goal 5 Library Governance

Develop library legislation to support effective service delivery and community participation.

Objective Review the current governance of libraries and implement changes in library legislation and regulations as required.

Action Define and communicate the roles and responsibilities of the Library Boards, Municipalities, Chief Executive Officers and Provincial Library to ensure effective service delivery.

Action Explore the make up of library boards and encourage a mix of gender, age groups and cultural representation.

Action Develop a consultation process which will anticipate community needs.

Strategic Planning Process

The Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia (LBANS), the Council of Regional Librarians (CORL), the Nova Scotia Library Association (NSLA), and the Nova Scotia Provincial Library (NSPL) participated in the development of this document. After a series of workshops involving members of those groups a representative committee worked with People Development, a management consulting firm, to crystallize their principles and goals. **Access For All** is intended as a framework for the advancement of public library service in Nova Scotia.

For more information on what's happening at the Provincial Library, please read our electronic newsletter, THE DISSEMINATOR.

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